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OPPOSITION to Senate Bill 1085

AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGALIZATION OF THE RETAIL SALE OF MARIJUANA AND
POSSESSION OF CANNABIS AND THE ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS IN THE CASE
OF CONVICTIONS BASED ON THE POSSESSION OF A SMALL AMOUNT OF CANNABIS

Public Hearing on March 22, 2019

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Melissa McGarry and I am from Westport. I oppose SB 1085 that would legalize marijuana for "recreation".

As the mother of three tweens/teens, I am concerned about this bill because of the inevitable increase in access to our kids. Many see this drug as harmless – marijuana is viewed as "safe," "not addictive," "organic," and "medicine" by our kids. But there is a growing body of data that marijuana is, in fact, harmful to our kids. Please do not let politics get ahead of science.

Today's marijuana has increasing levels of THC. Users in the 1970's and 1980's were exposed to THC levels of around 3%. Today's teens are seeing smokeable marijuana at 20-30% THC, and vapeable oil at more than **90%** THC. Edibles pose another set of challenges for keeping these products out of the hands of kids and teens. This is not your mother's marijuana.

Marijuana is in fact addictive, and 1 in 6 teens who use marijuana will develop an addiction. Marijuana is the most common drug reported in teen rehab admissions. As you vote on this bill, I ask that you consider the mental health of our kids. A study release this week by *The Lancet Psychiatry* revealed that regular marijuana use is linked to psychotic episodes later. Our kids' developing brains are especially sensitive to drug use. We already lack adequate mental health and drug treatment resource for our families. How will our families and healthcare system bear this additional burden? Marijuana is not harmless especially for the teen brain.

I know there are many who think putting an age restriction of 21 on marijuana will prevent youth use - one only needs to compare it to alcohol, and the efforts and dollars we've expended to keep it out of kids' hands with nominal success. In Colorado, youth use there increased **20%** in the two years after legalization. It has started to decrease a little but is still **35%** greater than the national average. (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2015/16). That will be Connecticut – and those will be OUR kids.

For the sake of our children, please vote **NO** on SB 1085.

Sincerely,

Melissa McGarry